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23 June 1953

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TO: Assistant Director  
Research and Reports

FROM: GMDS Exploitation Committee

SUBJECT: Exploitation of GMDS Collection by ORR

## I. Background

At the end of World War II, a vast and heterogeneous mass of German Government documents and files fell into the hands of the Allied Forces. A portion of this material, consisting primarily of the files of the German Armed Forces, is now located at the Federal Records Center in Alexandria, Louisiana, under the control of the Adjutant General's Office, Department of the Army. This 28,000 linear feet of material, known as the German Military Document Section (GMDS) Collection, is at present in varying degrees of processing, ranging from coded and filed holdings to completely unprocessed deposits.

The German Armed Forces were responsible for economic as well as military intelligence. Therefore possession of this collection by the United States is roughly analogous to the possession by a foreign power of the analysts' files and published reports of ORR, G-2, and A-2 combined. The Committee regrets to report that this source remains virtually unexploited.

In order to investigate this situation, a meeting of representatives of FDO, ORR, OGI, and OGD was convened by [redacted] 23 June 1953. One result was the creation of an ORR committee chaired by [redacted]. The ORR committee was to consider the means by which the GMDS material might best be exploited.

## II. The Problem and Its Causes

The Committee was faced with the fact that the GMDS Collection is, at the present time, virtually unexploited by ORR personnel. The first action of the Committee was to determine the reason for

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this situation. A canvass of the economic intelligence divisions of ORR has shown that:

- 1) The majority of analysts and supervisors are unaware of the existence of the GMDS Collection, and its potentialities
- 2) A minority of analysts have made a shallow and superficial investigation of GMDS and have rejected it as a source on the following grounds:
  - a) The material is in the German Language. (It is of course regrettable that this should be a barrier.)
  - b) The date of information of the bulk of this material is 1945 and this renders it too old for ORR purposes.
  - c) By their very nature the indexes are not a complete indication of what is available and the analyst has no way of knowing whether there is anything of value in the collection or not. (It must be pointed out that processing of the collection started in 1945 and indexes were prepared with an eye to intelligence requirements of that time. Consequently much material of current interest to ORR is not represented in the indexes.)
- 3) A small group of ORR researchers have gone into the collection and have discovered intelligence items which are of such significance as to indicate that the collection is indeed of such current value to ORR that further exploration of the collection is essential if ORR projects and reports are to represent comprehensive coverage of available and pertinent intelligence material. For example, the Strategic Division discovered a document classified Top Secret by the Soviets dated 18 October 1942 and signed by Stalin dealing with the subsidiary farms of industrial enterprises. This was in effect the plan for 1943 and included a wealth of statistical data which is of current interest to that Division. The Weapons Branch, Industrial Division has been able to make estimates of current military production by using plant capacities based on GMDS materials and modified for new developments. Most armament plants are engaged

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producing civilian items as well as military. This civilian production is often announced in quantitative terms by the Soviets. By relating announced production to the capacity required for such production and then subtracting this capacity from the total, the Weapons Branch was able to isolate capacity devoted to military items which could be translated into an estimate of present military production by a knowledge of industrial techniques and equipment requirements for such production.

**III. Recommendations**

It is the opinion of this Committee that the OMDS Collection contains highly valuable material which could materially aid this office in fulfilling its intelligence responsibilities. This material should be exploited by all echelons of ORR without delay. There are indications that the Germans want this material returned.

It has been rather conclusively demonstrated in the past that the mere circulation of a notice to the effect that a valuable source is available has not produced results. The successful functioning of ORR as a research team, and not as a disjointed mass of individual researchers (in this case) would indicate that a command decision is in order. Therefore we recommend that the division chiefs, and then the branch chiefs be informed that they will be held responsible for the exploitation of OMDS material in their fields. It should be strongly recommended to these officials that a minimum of one analyst per branch proceed to Alexandria and conduct a detailed preliminary examination of OMDS material. It should be further indicated to these officials that ST/PR in reviewing the substantive value of ORR's product will check coverage of the subject in the OMDS Collection.

**IV. Implementation of Recommendations**

The most important problem and deterrent to analysts approaching the collection has been that of not knowing where to look for specific subject material. One major cause for this problem seems to be that during the eight year period in which the collection has been slowly coded and filed our intelligence requirements have undergone radical changes. Therefore, indexes compiled in 1947 and 1947 have in many cases either not accurately described or included at all material which is of the utmost importance to

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the present time. The recovery of these indexes would be uneconomic and would constitute no solution to the problem. There is no substitute for aggressive research by the individual analyst. He alone knows his detailed requirements and can recognize the significance of the bits and pieces of information which form the mosaic of evaluated intelligence.

Therefore in order to accomplish the exploitation of this source in the most efficient and orderly manner possible the Committee proposes the following procedure.

1) At the request of the Committee OCD has prepared a 93 page comprehensive Research Aid on the GMDS Collection (CIA CD 5, May 1953) so that each analyst may make such use of indexes as is possible. This will be distributed on the basis of at least one copy per ORR Branch.

2) It is proposed that ORR Divisions exploit GMDS in turn so as not to overload facilities. Within the Division it is suggested that branch representatives operate in groups of about four persons. In this way the language problem can be reduced to a minimum since the Division Chief can designate a group that it contains a high percentage of personnel fluent in the language who can assist those who have no facility in German. The card indexes are in English in any case, and GMDS personnel are most cooperative in aiding the analyst with on the spot verbal translations.

3) In order to aid our exploitation of this material OCD is willing to assign [redacted] coordinator. The group of analysts scheduled to go to GMDS will be briefed by [redacted] will indicate specific references to material in which the group has an interest. [redacted] indicates that clearances for the group can be made available at [redacted] office. Arrangements for transportation can be made if necessary.

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people at Alexandria could have material pulled from the files and ready for use. They would also search unexploited material and process special requests. They could also investigate Russian material from GMDS and the Korean Collection of captured Soviet material which is also located at GMDS. A very small group of good people could be of great aid to the visiting groups, and could also spot valuable but unprocessed deposits of material.

#### V. Conclusions

The Committee feels without qualification that the GMDS Collection contains a sufficient volume of unexploited material of value to ORR to warrant an allocation of time necessary to exhaust this source. The Committee feels that by assigning responsibility to such exploitation and utilizing the procedure outlined above, the GMDS Collection can be used by ORR in a prompt, economical, and efficient manner. ORR must produce quality as well as quantity and GMDS can fill many gaps in our intelligence. While the successful use of this material depends in the final analysis on the research ability of the individual analyst, we can at least direct him to the threshold of opportunity.

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21 July 1953

Chief, FDD/OD

**Exploitation of GDS Collection by ORR**

1. This memo will serve to confirm our conversation of this date.

2. My understanding of your instructions to the Committee at its meeting of 23 January 1953 was that the Committee would determine what ORR wanted done with the GDS collection and that this determination would be sent to FDD for action. I was somewhat astonished to find that the Committee had recommended exploitation by teams of analysts from your offices who are to collect the needed information as well as analyze it.

3. The mission of FDD is to support you in the collection of information from foreign documents. The responsibility for exploiting captured documents, specifically excluded in NSCIB-16 is assigned to us by [redacted]. My interest is not in preserving my fancied prerogatives, it is only in providing you the support for which we are organized so that your officers may devote a maximum of their effort to analysis.

4. This Division is ready and eager to provide you with such support in whatever form may be of greatest benefit to your office. If the Committee's recommendation is adopted we will be glad to furnish an expert officer on the GDS collection to assist your people.

J. J. [redacted]

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